

Message Text

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S E C R E T JAKARTA 6284

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, ID
SUBJECT: SITUATION IN EAST TIMOR

1. SUMMARY: ACCORDING SENIOR INDONESIAN GENERAL, GO CURRENTLY ARRANGING SELECTION EAST TIMOR ASSEMBLY AS PRELUDE TO PETITION FOR INCORPORATION INTO INDONESIA. CONTACT HAS BEEN OPENED BETWEEN PGET AND PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT POSSIBLY LEADING TO RELEASE 23 PORTUGUESE MILITARY. GOI LEAVING TO PGET QUESTION OF INVITATION TO UN. END SUMMARY.

2. IN CONVERSATION WITH ME MAY 12 MAJOR GENERAL MURDANI, CHIEF INDONESIAN ARMY INTELLIGENCE AND OFFICER PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE FOR TIMOR OPERATION OUTLINED IN STRICT CONFIDENCE CURRENT EFFORTS CHOOSE ASSEMBLY AND WORK OUT POLITICAL AND INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS.

3. CURRENT INDONESIAN EFFORTS LARGELY DIRECTED TO SELECTION OF PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY WHICH HOPEFULLY BY END MAY WILL BE IN POSITION PETITION FOR INCORPORATION INTO INDONESIA. MURDANI EXPLAINED THAT ASSEMBLY WOULD BE COMPOSED OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM 13 COUNTIES (KABUPATENS). IN EIGHT OF THE COUNTIES CHOICES ARE BEING MADE BY ASSEMBLY OF PEOPLE AND DELEGATES WILL PROBABLY INCLUDE LOCAL RAJA PLUS TWO OR THREE OTHERS. IN THESE COUNTIES MURDANI FEELS PGET CAN APPROPRIATELY CLAIM AT LEAST 50 PERCENT SUPPORT OF

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POPULATION. FOUR COUNTIES IN INTERIOR REPRESENT THOSE

FROM WHICH PORTUGUESE RECRUITED SOLDIERS AND BOTH BY GEOGRAPHY AND INCLINATION REMAIN FRETILIN STRONGHOLDS. BECAUSE POPULATION CONSISTS TO LARGE EXTENT OF RELATIVES OF SOLDIERS WHO FORMER BACKBONE OF FRETILIN, SELECTION PROCESS IN THESE COUNTIES CANNOT BE NORMAL. GOI WILL IN EFFECT NEED TO CHOOSE FROM OUTSIDE REPRESENTATIVES THESE FOUR COUNTIES. THIRTEENTH COUNTY BETWEEN DILI AND INDONESIAN BORDER HAS BEEN ISOLATED IN HOPES FRETILIN FORCES WOULD DRIFT TOWARD AREA IN WHICH SOME FORM OF NEGOTIATION WITH THEM MIGHT BE POSSIBLE. THEREFORE, REPRESENTATIVES THIS COUNTY WILL ALSO IN FACT BE CHOSED FROM OUTSIDE.

4. MURDANI ADMITTED THAT PROCESS WAS NOT PERFECT BUT SAID THAT IN VIEW OF EXTREMELY LOW LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND CONTINUED HOSTILITY IN INTERIOR, INDONESIA HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO STAGE MANAGE TO SOME EXTENT.

5. WHILE THIS PROCESS GOING ON MURDANI SAID PGET ALSO BEING ENCOURAGED IMPROVE INTERNATIONAL IMAGE. THEY WILL SHORTLY OPEN OFFICE IN JAKARTA AND WILL TRY TO KEEP PERSONNEL AT UN. MURDANI SAID THAT FROM TIME HE TOOK OVER OPERATION IN MARCH HE HAS INSISTED THAT INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND DECISIONS RELATED THERETO APPEAR AT LEAST TO COME FROM PGET. INDONESIA, FOR EXAMPLE, HAS NOT HAD ANY FORMAL COMMUNICATION WITH UN SECREATRY GENERAL OR WITH COMMITTEE OF 24 ON POSSIBLE VISITS TO TIMOR. ANY SUCH COMMUNICATIONS SHOULD COME FROM PGET BUT THEY ARE NOT YET READY TO DO SO. POSSIBLE VISIT BY WINSPEARE GUICCIARDI, UN SYG GREPRESENTATIVE, HAS BEEN DISCUSSED BUT HE FOR MOMENT IS PUTTING EMPHASIS ON ATTENDING ROUNDTABLE MEETING OUTSIDE OF TIMOR AND INDONESIA WITH ALL ELEMENTS IN PICTURE. MURDANI SAID INDONESIA WOULD SUPPORT THIS EFFORT BUT HE COULD NOT PREDICT HOW MUCH SUCCESS GUICCIARDI WOULD HAVE.

6. ACCORDING MURDANI, PGET HAS ALSO MADE SOME PROGRESS IN RELATIONS WITH PORTUGUESE. (MURDANI EMPHASIZED THAT THIS WAS EXTREMELY SENSITIVE AND THAT HE HAD NOT TOLD ANYONE ELSE OUTSIDE OF GOI.)

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7. WITHIN LAST FEW WEEKS PGET IN NEW YORK HAS HAD CONTACT WITH TWO DIFFERENT PURTUGUESE GROUPS. ONE WAS OFFICIAL DELEGATION LED BY PINTO AND SECOND WAS UNOFFICIAL DELEGATION LED BY TOMAS, PORTUGUESE WRITER. LATTER INCLUDED WIFE OF ONE OF 23 MILITARY STILL HELD IN TIMOR AND BROTHER-IN-LAW OF PGET LEADER, MARIO CARRASCALAO. INTENTION OF LATTER DELEGATION WAS TO PROVIDE FREER FORUM FOR DISCUSSIONS THAN OFFICIAL DELEGATION COULD UNDERTAKE. DIS-

CUSSIONS WITH OFFICIAL DELEGATION WAS LARGELY PRO FORMA
BUT TOMAS DELEGATION MADE PROGRESS ON DETAILS.

8. ACCORDING MURDANI, PORTUGUESE INTEREST WAS LARGELY IN
OBTAINING RELEASE OF 23 MILITARY PRISONERS. PGET REPRE-
SENTATIVES EXPLAINED THAT THEY WANTED GOOD RELATIONS WITH
PORTUGAL BUT THAT THEY FACED SERIOUS FINANCIAL PROBLEM,
PARTICULARLY DURING PERIOD UNTIL INCORPORATION INTO INDONESIA
COULD BE COMPLETED AND PROVINCE COULD RECEIVE REGULAR
BUDGETARY ALLOCATION FROM GOI. FOR THIS REASON, RELEASE
OF FUNDS ALLOCATED TO EAST TIMOR BY GOP AND STILL BEING
HELD IN BANK WAS IMPORTANT. TOMAS REPORTEDLY SAID THAT
IF THIS WAS ONLY PROBLEM, SOMETHING COULD BE WORKED OUT
BUT HE WOULD HAVE TO CHECK WITH PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT
(PRESUMABLY PRESIDENT). TOMAS HAS NOW WRITTEN PGET
INDICATING PURTUGAL WILLINGNESS TO HAVE FURTHER DISCUSSIONW
AND MURDANI IS NOW SEEKING GOI VIEWS IN JAKARTA.

9. MURDANI ADMITTED FRANKLY THAT INDONESIA HAD NOT
WANTED RELEASE 23 SOLDIERS BECAUSE OF WHAT THEY MIGHT
SAY ABOUT INDONESIAN INTERVENTION. AS FAR AS HE WAS
CONCERNED, THIS PROBLEM LARGELY PAST AND HE WOULD PERSON-
ALLY FAVOR PERMITTING PGET TO RELEASE SOLDIERS PROVIDED
PGET RECEIVED SATISFACTION ON PORTUGUESE FINANCIAL HELP.
HE ESTIMATED PORTUGAL MAY HAVE AS MUCH AS \$60 MILLION
UNSPENT FROM PRIOR BUDGET ALLOCATIONS FOR EAST TIMOR.
IF MURDANI GOT CLEARANCE WITHIN GOI, SOLDIERS COULD BE
RELEASE BEFORE AUGUST.

10. MURDANI SAID SOLDIERS STILL UNDER INDONESIAN CONTROL.
THEY ARE GIVEN SPECIAL FOOD AND ARE WELL CARED FOR ALTHOUGH
SOME ARE SUFFERING FROM SKIN DISEASES. BECAUSE MOST OF
THEM ARE SYMPATHETIC TO AN OLDER REGIME, MOST WOULD
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PROBABLY NOT WISH TO RETURN TO PORTUGAL. SOME HAVE
INDICATED DESIRE TO GO TO BRAZIL.

11. COMMENT: BECAUSE OF IMPORTANCE OF CONTACT WITH
GENERAL MURDANI AND SENSITIVITY OF INFORMATION ON CONTACTS
WITH PORTUGUESE, I WOULD PREFER FOREGOING NOT BE USED
DIRECTLY IN ANY DISCUSSIONS IN LISBON. IF AMBASSADOR
CARLUCCI FEELS IT DESIRABLE, I WOULD HAVE NO OBJECTION
TO HIS MENTIONING THAT WE ARE CONTINUING TO EXPRESS TO
GOI OUR INTEREST IN 23 PRISONERS AND HAVE IMPRESSION THAT
GOI MAY BE ENCOURAGING DIRECT CONTACTS ON THIS AND OTHER
ISSUES BETWEEN PGET AND PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT. WE
CONTINUE TO UNDERSTAND THAT PRISONERS ARE IN GOOD HEALTH.
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